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STATE FOR NEA/ARPI, NEA/PA, NEA/AIA, NEA/PI, INR/NESA, R/MR, I/GNEA,
B/BXN, B/BRN, NEA/PPD, NEA/IPA FOR ALTERMAN
LONDON FOR TSOU
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SUBJECT: KUWAIT SPECIAL MEDIA REACTION: RATIFICATION OF NEW PRESS
LAW

REF: KUWAIT 768

Selected Headlines

11. Tuesday, 7 March 2006

-- Al-Rai Al-Aam front page "Press and Publications Law, the first sign of reform"; "Press and Publications Law was unanimously ratified after superficial amendments"; "Most prominent amendments tackled prohibition of encroachment on the Lord, prophets or companions"; "Information Minister: Law turns Kuwait into a model--we hope the effect of the law will characterize official media with transparency, presentation of varied opinions, and more use of technology"; "Two 'Reshaids' for a rational and responsible media"

-- Al-Rai Al-Aam p. 14 "Reform has begun"

-- Al-Rai Al-Aam p. 16 "National Assembly unanimously ratified and referred to government Press and Publications Law"; "Al-Reshaid: Law will move Kuwait into a new phase of professionalism"

-- Al-Rai Al-Aam p. 17 "Press and Publications Law applauded"

-- Al-Rai Al-Aam p. 18 "Faisal Al-Malek: Law affirms keenness for democracy"

-- Al-Watan front page "Independents changed their position Adding 'Prophet's Lineage' opens door for 'sedition and sectarianism'"; "National Assembly ratifies Press and Publications Law in one hour"

-- Al-Watan, p. 19 "Adding infringement on Prophet's Lineage within the issues punishable by law"

-- Al-Watan, p. 20 "Text of Press and Publications Law as ratified by National Assembly"

-- Al-Watan, p. 21 "Amendments by Independent MPs that were rejected by the National Assembly"

-- Al-Seyassah front page "Despite harsh penalties restricting freedom of press work, law was unanimously ratified"

-- Al-Seyassah p. 8 "Al-Reshaid: Law is a historic breakthrough for Kuwait"

-- Al-Qabas front page "Information Minister: Support for freedoms

and revival of Kuwaiti pioneering role"; "National Assembly bypassed attempt to obstruct law's ratification"

-- Al-Qabas p. 6 "National Assembly unanimously ratifies law in both readings"

-- Al-Qabas p. 10 "Reactions to ratification of Press and Publications Law"

-- Al-Anbaa front page "Law was ratified in 40 minutes"; "Adding Prophet Mohammed's Lineage and clarification of meaning in the explanatory memorandum"

Block Quotes

12. Tuesday, 7 March 2006

-- Al-Qabas staff wrote on the front page of the progressive Arabic-language daily under the title "An Achievement for all": "Kuwait finally has a new press law on which it should be congratulated. With the new law Kuwait maintains its leadership in the world of freedom of the press and freedom in general. On a regional level, freedom of the press is the launch pad for the all freedoms and its guarantees. It is a constant popular watchdog over the governments. It is an achievement for the entire nation; a new era. It is a clear sign that reform should be the real priority. Here we are today reiterating that the freedom of the press is the safety valve for any political system and the guarantor of all constitutional and legal guarantees. Because it is an influential tool for civil society and no nation is strong without a strong press, our example to follow is the advanced countries."

-- Al-Anbaa staff wrote on the front page of the moderate

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Arabic-language daily under the title "When opinion is arrested": "Freedom of the press will pay dearly with the ratification of press law which was done without discussion and very quickly and with unanimous agreement by the government and Members of Parliament. 'What is the use of printing new newspapers and continuing the current ones with no real freedom?' This is what the lawyers' syndicate, a neutral entity, said when it pointed out that certain aspects of the press law conflict with the constitution. What happened was an arrest of the freedom guaranteed by the constitution. What we see today is a fatal blow to the freedom of opinion and the freedom of the press which takes us back to the period before the 20th century."

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